

New Jersey AG Announces New Partnership in Technology to Aid Crime Victims

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On April 20th, New Jersey Attorney General Stuart Rabner announced that the Division of Criminal Justice -- Office of Victim Witness Advocacy is expanding its Victim Information and Notification (VINE) Program. VINE, a national and statewide computer-based communication program, allows victims to register with state and county law enforcement agencies to receive notification information on an offender's custody status.

According to Criminal Justice Director Gregory A. Paw, the VINE program, which has been fully operational in New Jersey on the county level since 2005, is now integrating the Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board. This new implementation will enable crime victims to use their telephones or the Internet to find the status of an offender within these departments' systems.

"New Jersey has always been at the forefront when advocating for crime victims," Rabner said. "The expansion of the partnership between VINE and New Jersey's Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board gives crime victims broader access to knowing the whereabouts of offenders."

"The New Jersey Department of Corrections is pleased to partner with the Attorney General's Office in the very laudable effort of keeping crime victims apprised of the status and location of offenders," said Commissioner George Hayman.

"The State Parole Board's website now links crime victims directly to the VINE searchable database," Parole Board Chairman Peter J. Barnes Jr. said. "We are proud to offer victims this new information portal."

Sandra McGowan, Chief of the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy, noted that in 1998, four New Jersey counties -- Atlantic, Monmouth, Union and Morris -- were among the first in the nation to begin using VINE. In 2007, the VINE program is up and running in 19 counties. Since its inception, the VINE has been searched more than 250,000 times. The program provides vital information and notification 24 hours, 365 days a year.